

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez (CA-47) today met with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to discuss a number of issues important to her constituents, in particular her concerns regarding human rights issues surrounding the Vietnam and South Korean community.

During the meeting, Rep. Sanchez pressed Secretary Clinton and requested that the State Department be proactive about engaging Vietnam into changing its Ministry of Information and Communication policies, specifically policies concerning the ability to use the Internet freely and without government interference. As a result, Secretary Clinton agreed to convene a meeting with Members of Congress to discuss how to better address the issue of internet freedom in the international community.

Rep. Sanchez also urged the Department of State to push the Government of Vietnam to release Prisoners of Conscience, a group of Vietnamese activists, Trinh Khai Thanh Thuy, Le Thi Cong Nhan, and Pham Thanh Nghien. Rep. Sanchez requested that Secretary Clinton direct Ambassador Michalak to specifically visit activist Tran Khai Thanh Thuy who is currently ill and imprisoned. Rep. Sanchez also pushed the Secretary to put Vietnam back on the Countries of Particular Concern list.

Rep. Sanchez also expressed her community's concerns about the growing tensions between North and South Korea. Secretary Clinton agreed to work with Rep. Sanchez to organize a call to brief members of the Korean community about North and South Korean relations.

Finally, Rep. Sanchez, who is Vice Chair of the House Homeland Security Committee, expressed her concerns about the growing violence at the U.S.-Mexico border and asked for Secretary Clinton's help in stopping illegal guns from going into Mexico. They both agreed that Mexican President Felipe Calderon's recent visit to the United States was successful and the U.S. and Mexico governments are both committed to making the border safer.

Rep. Sanchez, who has been rejected a visa to Vietnam multiple times, is the founder and Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on Vietnam. Throughout her time in Congress, she has been a strong and vocal advocate for religious freedom and social justice in Vietnam. Rep. Sanchez believes Vietnam's government must be held accountable for its human rights violations before viable economic relations can be pursued and has urged the State Department

to place Vietnam back on its Countries of Particular Concern (CPC) list.

In March of 2009, Rep. Sanchez authored a bi-partisan letter to major internet service providers expressing concern regarding worsening internet restrictions in Vietnam. The Congresswoman urged these service providers to respect the privacy and free speech rights of the Vietnamese people by providing users with full and unobstructed internet access. She continues to call for the release of detained and imprisoned human rights and democracy advocates, including Tran Khai Than Thuy, Pham Thanh Nghien, and Le Thi Cong Nhan.